



# INFORMATION FOR VISA AND PERMIT HOLDERS.

# 1

## What is a Visa?

A visa is an official document issued to individuals who do not have continuing rights in the Cook Islands (i.e., non-Cook Islanders or those without Cook Islands Permanent Residency). A visa allows them to travel to and enter the Cook Islands.

## What is a Permit?

A permit allows the visa holder to stay in the Cook Islands for a specific duration, as approved in their visa.

# 2

## Key Changes to Visa and Permit Process

### Previous Process (pre April 2023):

Under the previous act, approved permit holders received an Authority to Travel letter (ATT) for their initial arrival. Once the permit was endorsed in the passport, travellers could re-enter the Cook Islands without presenting the ATT again.

### Current Process (effective April 2023):

With the implementation of the Cook Islands Immigration Regulations in April 2023, the process changed. All individuals without continuing rights must hold both a valid visa and permit for travel, entry, and to stay in the Cook Islands.

### For Travel and Entry:

A visa, similar to the previous ATT, is issued with an expiry date consistent with the approved timeframe.

Upon approval, applicants are notified via email and advised to present their visa when requested by airline or immigration officials.

Depending on the type of visa approval, the visa can grant either unlimited or single travel to the Cook Islands.

### To Stay:

To stay in the Cook Islands, a permit must be endorsed in the passport, allowing the holder to stay for the duration specified in the visa.

# 3

## Why do I need to show my Visa when travelling to and from the Cook Islands?

When travelling to and from the Cook Islands, it is essential to show your visa for the following reasons:

### Verification of Approval

The visa must be presented to airline and immigration officials to demonstrate that you have been granted approval to travel to and enter the Cook Islands.

### Essential details provided by the Visa

The visa contains valuable information about the holder, including:

- **Passport Details:** Ensures that the visa is linked to the correct individual.
- **Type of Visa Issued:** Specifies the nature of your visit (e.g., visitor, work, etc.).
- **Expiry Date:** Indicates the validity period of your visa.
- **Employment Information (if applicable):** Details your employment status if your visa includes work rights.
- **Travel Permissions:** Clarifies whether the visa allows unlimited travel or single entry only.

### Information provided by the Permit

The permit, endorsed in your passport, provides basic information such as:

- **Permit Number:** Unique identifier for your permit.
- **Expiry Date:** Validity period of your stay in the Cook Islands.
- **Employment Status:** Indicates if employment is approved or not approved.
- **Approved Duration:** Specifies how long you are permitted to stay in the Cook Islands.

### Why a Permit alone is insufficient

Relying solely on the permit is not enough to determine your ability to travel to and enter the Cook Islands. The permit does not provide comprehensive information about your travel authorisation, which is why both documents are necessary.

### Implementation and Enforcement

The new visa and permit process has been in effect since May 2023. Applicants or the person they have authorised to act on their behalf have been informed of these requirements through email and verbal communication by an immigration official. Cook Islands Immigration provided a 12-month grace period, and now the requirement to present a valid visa for travel to and entry into the Cook Islands is now being enforced.